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INAUGURATION

—OF—

The Rev. Henry E. Dosker, D. D.

—AS—

Professor in the School of Ecclesiastical History

—IN THE—

PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF KENTUCKY

at Louisville, Ky., May 2, 1904.

FOURTH AVENUE CHURCH.

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FOURTH AVENUE CHURCH.

Programme.

1. Organ Prelude.

2. Anthem.....By the Choir

3. Invocation. . . . . .Rev. S. M. Neel, D. D.
Kansas City, Mo.

4. Reading of the Scripture.....Rev. J. Kinsey Smith, D. D.
Louisville, Ky.

5. Anthem.....By the Choir

6. Announcement.....By Rev. Clarence K. Crawford, D. D.
President of the Faculty.

7. Reading of the Constitutional Question.
By Rev. J. McClusky Blayney, D. D., Frankfort, Ky.

8. Reply. . . . .By the Professor Elect

9. Signing of the Declaration.....By the Same

10. Inauguration Prayer. . . ..By Rev. Peyton H. Hoge, D. D.
Louisville, Ky.

11. Hymn, "O God of Bethel, by Whose Hand."

12. Charge to the Professor.....By Rev. J. G. Hunter, D. D.
Harrodsburg, Ky.

13. Inaugural Address.....By Rev. Henry E. Dosker, D. D.

14. Hymn, "The Church's One Foundation."

15. Final Declaration of Installation,
By the President of the Board.

16. Dismissal of the Audience.....By the Same

The Services were held in the Fourth Avenue
Presbyterian Church, Rev. J. Kinsey Smith, D. D., Pastor

Inauguration Prayer.

By Rev. Peyton H. Hoge, D. D.,

Pastor of the Warren Memorial Church,
Louisville, Ky.

Almighty God, King of Saints, Who hast chosen Zion for Thy dwellingplace, and Thy rest forevermore; O Christ, our Redeemer, Who hast founded Thy Church upon Thyself and hast promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; O Holy Spirit, Who dwellest within the Church, revealing the Father and the Son; we invoke Thy presence and power to seal, with Thine own approval, this relation, which we establish in Thy name.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for all that is great and glorious in the history of Thy Church and in the lives of Thy people. We thank Thee for the courage and fidelity of those, who loved not their lives unto death, but who sealed their testimony with their blood. We thank Thee for the consecrated learning of those, who have spent their lives in the pursuit of truth and in defending and upholding it. We thank Thee for all, who in the dark ages kept its torch alive, and its flame bright. We thank Thee for those, who broke the shackles of tyranny and superstition and who purchased for us the light and liberty we enjoy. We thank Thee for our own branch of Thy Church, and for the devotion, with which its founders maintained the faith once delivered to the saints, dying the heather of their native hills, or staining the sands behind their ocean-dykes, with their blood. We thank Thee that by the errors and the sins of Thy Church we may be warned, as we are enthused by their heroism and encouraged by their example. Help us, we beseech Thee, O God of our fathers, to follow in their footsteps, as they followed Christ, and to meet the responsibilities and issues of our own day, as they served their generation, before they fell asleep.

We bless Thee, O Lord, for Thy good providence, in sending unto us this, Thy servant, to teach us Thy ways with Thy Church of old. We thank Thee for the wisdom and learning Thou hast been pleased to bestow upon him, but especially that Thy truth abides in his heart, and that Thy grace is manifest in his life. We thank Thee for the favour Thou hast given him with his students, fellow-workers and all who are associated with him in this community. We pray Thee that Thou wouldst preserve his life and his health among us, and the health of all who are dear to him. Enrich him more and more in knowledge and wisdom and spiritual grace. Bless this institution, which has been founded for the advancement of Thy kingdom in the world.

Bless those who teach and those who are taught, and may they all be taught of God. Bless the Churches that govern it, and may they advance in all that makes for truth and unity and the glory of Thy name; and enable us to fulfill Thine own prayer, O Christ, that we all may be one, as Thou art in the Father, that we may be one in Thee.

And the glory shall be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Charge to the Professor.

By Rev. J. G. Hunter, D. D.,
of Harrodsburg, Ky.

Dr. Dosker:—

It is a pleasant duty to which I address myself, by the appointment of the Board, to say a few words now that you have been formally installed as professor in the School of Church History, in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Kentucky.

After much deliberation and many prayers to God for direction, the Board of Directors unanimously elected you to this Chair, made vacant by the death of the lamented Dr. Martin, and we are glad that you hold this important position in our institution.

Living many miles away from here, passing your life chiefly in the study and class room, with no effort to attract the attention of men, you made a scholarly reputation, that passed far beyond your quiet, local boundaries, which, you will allow me to say, has been amply sustained by your work with us during the past year.

You are the professor in a school, where you must think great thoughts and consider mighty deeds. You must talk about individuals and nations, about plans and facts, not simply as they appear or disappear on the field of time, the mere history of a free creature that is susceptible of change; but of individuals and nations, of plans and facts, that either promote or seek to hinder the counsels of God with regard to the redemption of men through Jesus Christ. You have long and well considered the Holy Scriptures for they are the source of Sacred History, wherein God in special action exhibits Himself in the completest revelation, which we possess. You have given careful attention to Profane History (for God rules and controls there as well, allowing nothing to thwart His designs or frustrate His plans) in order to show the student that God works with man and man with God in the development of the human race in its temporal character only, for thereby is reared a platform on which great things may be done, the design and end of which is eternal. And all this knowledge you have found serviceable in teaching the events of the progress of the Church, as dependent upon and sustained by the Holy Spirit. She communicates to individuals and nations that Revelation with all its Means of Grace, which at once constitutes her duty and hope of success—teaching at one time the history of those splendid victories over

the power of error and darkness, which represents the Church's luminous external prosperity, and again of oppression and persecution for the truth's sake, which, though costing tears and blood, have nevertheless dispelled lukewarmness and worldliness from the inner life of the Church, strengthening her faith, intensifying her testimony and winning converts to her cause. Surely yours is a high position indeed, that of standing before men, candidates for the gospel ministry, to point out the ways of God, who as working alone or working with men, presses to a conclusion his own wondrous plan.

But, doubtless, you will speak of some of these things in your Inaugural Address to-night and, therefore, that I encroach not on your time, I will content myself with these words as a charge to your conscience and heart. Continue in your allegiance to the truth, in your loyalty to Jesus Christ, in your devotion to this Seminary, for with this both the Board and the Church will be abundantly content. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, for this is the whole duty of every professor in this Seminary.

To God's abiding grace and benediction, I heartily commend you.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

By the Rev. Henry E. Dosker, D. D.

"The Place of Ecclesiastical History in the Seminary Curriculum."

Mr. President, Members of the Board of Directors, Fellow Instructors, Fellow Students, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Swifter than a weaver's shuttle the pendulum of time swings to and fro. It seems but yesterday that the call of the Board of Directors of this Seminary came to me and that I tore myself away from my old moorings, from my own people and my own Church, to cast in my lot with you.

A whole School-year has passed since that time.

We have learned to know each other better and we see things more clearly than we did a year ago. Every pledge that was made to me, on your side, has been fulfilled and, on my part, I have striven, to the best of my ability, to enter heartily into the new life and the new responsibilities and the new environment; with results, which I humbly trust, are not wholly disappointing.

I can scarcely believe that I have lived among you only a few months. These months, for practical results, seem to have been crowded years; for daily sweet surprises—but days.

And now at the close of an experimental stage, I am formally to begin my work. There is great wisdom in this plan of action of the Presbyterian Church, in regard to newly elected theological teachers. There is in it a smack of the old canny Scotch spirit. It opens a door of quiet selfrespecting exit, in case of a misfit and is an admirable arrangement, from every point of view. And now what shall I say? What shall be the topic of my discourse, on this solemn occasion?

The relation between the various branches of the Seminary course is a close one, as is the relation between its teachers and pupils. The latter are no longer "boys" under the whip of a taskmaster, but "men," who have learned to appreciate the motto—"*non scholae sed vitae discimus.*" The Seminary is like the University, in that it deals with *men* and *subjects* rather than with *boys* and *class-books*. Yet it is not an "*universitas scientiarum,*" but rather "*an universitas docentium et discentium.*" We all appreciate the infinitudes of the task before us, we all know that we can but dabble in the shore-current, whilst all untouched the mighty mid-stream passes on before us. Teachers and pupils, therefore, feel themselves "*commilitones*" in the seminary-course, standing shoulder to shoulder for a common

task, in unity of spirit; the elder and younger brethren in the one great household of faith and truth.

In looking about me for an appropriate subject, well within the horizon of my own field of labor, many temptations offered themselves; but believing that general conceptions rather than the specific treatment of narrowly limited issues are in fullest accord with the demands of the occasion, I have chosen for my theme:

"The Place of Ecclesiastical History in the Seminary Course."

I. *The ancient Theological Curriculum.*

From time immemorial the course of study, in preparation for the ministry, consisted of these four main branches: Theologia, Ecclesia, Biblia, Rhetorica. The study of Theology, as a scholastic discipline, for centuries occupied the front rank, for Theology dominated the sciences and was their queen.

But Theology was not a subjective philosophical product, its foundation was objective, it was built on revelation; hence the immediate necessity of the study of Exegesis.

In the Middle Ages, when Scholasticism was triumphant, independent exegetical work was practically suspended and was replaced by the work of the "Catenists." But no sooner had the Reformation broken the shackles of the Book, but it demanded once more the fullest attention of the Church and a free Exegesis became a fruitful source of a new theology and the glory of Prostestantism. Naturally associated with this movement was a new development of sacred Rhetoric, which had well nigh become extinct with the decadence of public preaching in the worship of the Middle Ages.

And equally with these three the study of Ecclesiastical history found a tremendous impetus in the activities of the Reformation, which affected all ecclesiastical institutions alike, like a spiritual earthquake. In fact ecclesiastical history, as a science, was born from the Renaissance and the Reformation. In the ages before it we have *chroniclers,* no *historians.* There was no critical spirit, no true sifting of the material at hand, no objective treatment of the mass of reported facts.

To know one's self, one must know the stock from which he has sprung and the heritage, which physically and mentally and morally has been bequeathed to him by preceding generations. And spiritually and theologically one can only know himself by knowing the process, through which present conditions have passed in their development from the remote past. The nascent scientific development of the Middle Ages had two fulcrums. The one was the Cathedral school, which from the time of Charlemagne had become the appendage of every noted convent or church and which was, of course, entirely dominated by the local clergy. The other was the university, which arose in the 13th century, with its larger aims and more varied fields of operation and greater liberty; nominally controlled by the Church, but really enjoying such a degree of license that it naturally became the hotbed of all manner of heresy and, after the days of the Renaissance, the mother of the Reformation.

Since the Council of Trent, therefore, in the middle of the 16th century, the Church set her face flintlike against the emancipated university and sought, either to obtain control of its affairs or to offset its influence on the education of the clergy, by enlarging the sphere of the church-schools, which began to make theological training their special aim and which gave to Theology an isolated position and an undue preponderance over the other preparatory disciplines; thus completely destroying the old University aims and devoting themselves to the subjective-practical rather than to the objective-scientific aspect of Theology, as one of the sciences.

At this Council of Trent, in the 23d session, the "college" was mentioned as—"a perpetual seminary of God's ministry," and here the word "*seminary*," in the sense of a theological institute, is first mentioned.

The Protestant Churches, through their sectarian divisions, were early compelled to adopt the Romish plan, and gave to their training-schools for the ministry a distinctively separatistic hue. Where state-churches existed, the university ideals survived for a while; but even these universities logically and practically narrowed themselves down to the limitations of the symbolic life of the Churches they represented, or soon began to occupy an antagonistic position. Thus the purely scientific

aspect of Theology was largely lost sight of in the "training-school" for the ministry. Every Protestant denomination had its own schools, taught its own confessional theology and paid special attention to its own minute differentiation from other sects and thus the theological discipline became distinctly denominational in character.

The other branches of the course shared this fate and thus Dogmatics, Exegesis, Ecclesiastical history and even Homiletics became individualized, to the unquestionable detriment of the great cause of Protestantism. High walls of partition were built up, between the various branches of the Protestant Church, and for many centuries brethren, of practically the same faith, lay separated in bitterly hostile camps. The wounds of this bitter strife are only slowly healing. A reaction set in, and in this reactionary process, as is inevitably the case, the pendulum threatens to swing back to the other extreme of its arc. For years voices have been heard, clamoring for a reform in the Seminary curriculum.

II. *Is reform necessary?*

Stress has been laid on our changed conditions. We are told that the relation between the various denominations has lost the asperity of past times, that the confessional consciousness of the Protestant Churches is at a low ebb, that symbols have had their day and that the tendency of the age is decidedly anti-dogmatic. Why then burden the hearts and minds of our students with that which has lost its interest with the mass of men? Why then bind our students to a scholastic training, which may perhaps rather unfit than fit them for their later ministry? We admit the force of this argument, but would warn you against its conclusions. The reaction from the bigoted denominationalism of the past was inevitable; its forbidding walls of separation must necessarily fall of their own weight. The age of bitter sectarianism is gone, never to return, its ghost is laid, it has had its day—let us thank God for it.

"In London the other day the warrant under which John Bunyan, author of the "Pilgrim's Progress," was committed to Bedford jail was sold at auction for $1.525. It is signed by thirteen justices of the peace, six baronets and seven squires. It charges that Bunyan had been teaching and preaching otherwise than "acording to the liturgee and practice of the Church of

England.'' It is said that he was imprisoned for six months under this warrant, but as he passed twelve years, from 1660 to 1672 in Bedford jail, there must have been other warrants against him.''

These things will never again occur, we fondly trust.

The walls are yet standing, it is true, but they are lowered to reasonable dimensions and are now felt, by most men, to be for *distinction* rather than for *separation.*

Then why not tear them down completely, why not allow the principle of reaction, of which mention was made, to reach its logical outcome, in the complete obliteration of all things, that differentiate the households of the great Prostestant family?

History gives the answer.

The comprehensive Church means the death-warrant of all that the Church truly stands for. Groen Van Prinsterer's maxim holds good for the Church as well as for the State: ''*Pour etre impartial il faut appartenir a une partie*''—''to be impartial one must belong to a party.'' The article of our holy confession—''I believe in the holy Catholic Church—I believe in the communion of saints''—means most to the man who occupies a definite standpoint. He feels and believes in the oneness of the Church of the redeemed and his theology is tinged by this conviction. All onesidedness, all needless harshness and angularity of statement, all obstreperous individualism and confessional selfconceit melt away in the mellowing words—''we know in part and we prophesy in part.''

The reactionary impulse has led many to antagonize symbolical Dogmatics, simply because they were unable to appreciate the true value of this branch of theological discipline.

History teaches us not to despair, for the anti-dogmatic tendency of the day must at last expend its strength and the inevitable reaction will again assign to theology its true place in the curriculum of our theological schools.

People have also clamored for the discontinuance of Homiletical training, under the plea that thus the individuality of the student is destroyed and that we imitate the practice of children, who cut a figure from tissue-paper, properly folded, and as they unfold the strip—presto—an endless row of like forms appears. But they evidently forget that this same argument will hold against all training of whatever kind; that individuali-

ty asserts itself in the superstructure rather than in the foundations, in the branches and in the ripening fruit rather than in the root and in the stem.

These reformers would have us lay special stress on the *fads* of the day, on sociology, on the economics of church-life, on questions of amusement and physical culture and on a variety of other matters, which occupy the attention of the ministry of our day. But they forget that, should their clamor be heeded, the seminary-curriculum would be changed into a hopelessly practical course, into a chameleon, changing its hues with every change of its environment.

The same cry is raised in the field of Exegesis. We are told to drop, except as an elective, the study of the Biblical languages. Hebrew and Greek are dead languages, "let the dead bury their dead." We are told that the student, at best, only gets a smattering of these dead tongues.

And yet this partial knowledge enables him to do sound exegetical work, as far as he is able, and it may prove the foundation of larger attainments in the future. It certainly enables our men to obtain a grasp on the Scriptures, which, with a bare translation of the text, is a hopeless impossibility.

Nor does the historic work of the Seminary curriculum escape this general criticism. It claimed that the issues, here presented, are dead issues, that no one cares for the dead bones of antiquity, that we live *in* the present and *for* the present.

One wonders what the course of the Seminary-curriculum, if placed in the hands of these iconoclasts, for reconstruction, would be like.

Shall we heed these voices? Shall we abolish the historic scheme of theological studies, devitalizing theology, emasculating exegesis, flattening our homiletics into a sociological whirligig, abolishing our historic studies and substituting for them a roundelay of cotemporaneous Church-gossip, in which each Church shall complacently regard itself and softly stroke down the other, trying to forget *what* she is and *why* and *what for?*

God forbid.

Especially as regards Church-life there is in America an appalling lack of the historic spirit, a lack which is noted by all foreign observers, as is witnessed by the foreign reports of our great ecclesiastical meetings.

Dr. Reed said, on the occasion of his installation in office: "Church-history is not a favorite study" and who will contradict him? Generally speaking it is harder to interest the seminary-student in it than in anything else.

And yet Church-history is the most *actual* of all the studies in the course. Its interest is that of the thrill of life and it re-acts on all the other disciplines of the curriculum.

And thus, whilst we leave the scheme of our studies in the main intact, we must endeavor to rejuvenate and to revitalize them; we must add, not detract; we must realign our studies; we must work at the superstructure, without attempting the perilous task of removing the foundations; we must believe in our seminary- work and energize it, until we gain in width without losing in depth; and are conscious of creating a selfrespecting ministry, believing in its Church, in itself, in its symbols, and yet warm of heart, broad in its affections and in thorough sympathy with the wider interests of the Kingdom of God.

III. *The true place of Ecclesiastical history in the Seminary Course.*

What place are we to assign to Ecclesiastical history in this process?

It may be in order here to ask what we understand by "Ecclesiastical history." In our definition we must at once eliminate all extraneous matter. The primary and the secondary must be sharply distinguished. We must consider the Church as an institute, as an independent organization, and thus treat it historically..

Church-history then becomes the systematic narration of the events of the life of the Church as an institution, logically and chronologically considered. Since history is a process and not a mere order of events piled together at haphazard, it is the task of the church-historian to grasp the great ideas, underlying this process, and he must try to understand and to appreciate their genetic relations. He is, therefore, called critically to sift and to separate the sources, and in view of the limitless field before him, to keep in touch with the main current of the life of the Church, strenuously guarding against the danger of being led astray by secondary matters.

The genetic study of Church-history deals, therefore, less with the minute events of the process he is studying, than with the great principles of the course of their evolution. The first belongs to another field, that of special church-history, which limits itself to smaller portions of the great whole and is exhaustive in character.

But this latter is not the task of the seminary-course. It simply points out these fields, which later on may be worked by the student at his leisure. I may mention the history of Missions, a tremendous field by itself and for which special chairs have been established in many schools; the history of Exegesis and Introduction; the history of Worship; the history of Symbols; the history of Sacred Rhetoric; special histories of special periods and of special events, of individual lands and of individual Churches, ecclesiastical biography and countless other matters, which each have their special value for the ministry of the gospel, but for which the Seminary-course affords neither time nor opportunity.

From the nature of the case the work of the Seminary historian must be genetic and general, rather than specific and exhaustive. The Seminary-student is a discoverer rather than an explorer, he deals with continents rather than with limited areas, he builds foundations rather than superstructures; but even thus the glimpses of the field before him are a warning and a comfort and an inspiration.

But as a student of general Church-history he has but to follow the main current of the Church-institute and he needs a keen sense of discrimination in observing the channel of this current. As Dr. Kuyper has so beautifully said, in his Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology: "When once the pluroformity has accentuated itself, Church-history of course cannot satisfy itself with allowing these currents to run in parallel courses, but has to decide in which bed the main current of ecclesiastical life is moving; a matter which does not depend on the greater or less massality of the various institutes, but rather on the impetus wherewith the pure institutionary idea forces its waters through each several channel. The other institutes have then become of secondary importance and are only so far interesting, as they either undergo transformation in their own spheres, or show, in their own acts and events, either their still inherent power or

the disadvantages of their own deviation. Thus general church-history leads us to a point, where the current of ecclesiastical life spreads itself before us like a many-armed delta and disembogues itself into the actualities of the present, in such a way that the main current is always plainly distinguishable from the side-streams. Then history can go no further and hands over her task to the statistician."

Now in determining what is the main current of the ecclesiastical institute, we have simply to consider the original type of that institute, as it was founded by Christ and the apostles. This type must ever remain the ideal and that branch of the Church which, in its organization and doctrine, corresponds most closely to the original idea, must be considered the main institute. But since different observers and critics must always be governed, to a certain extent, by their own individuality and since perfect objectivity of view and statement is unattainable by imperfect men, who are *nolens volens* under the influence of their early training, of their environment and temperament, there remains always a large element of individuality in the treatment of Church-history and the conscientious student will be led by this study to the enlargement of his horizon, to the accentuation of his faith in the "Holy Catholic Church" and at the same time to a more definite understanding and appreciation of his own position. If this be so, this discipline must necessarily be of the utmost value to the theological student. Nothing can take its place, since it has no equivalent. The clamor against it is senseless, since no one who has ever tasted its refreshing and strengthening waters, will dash the cup from the lips of others. The antagonism against it arises with men who have never adequately studied this branch of theological science and who are, therefore, incompetent judges.

What then is the

IV. *Usefulness of this discipline to the theological student?*

It is worthy of our consideration that the revival of Calvinism in the Netherlands is closely related, nay has given birth to a remarkable activity in the field of historic research. The battle-cry yonder has become: "*do not intermit your historical studies.*" And this is but the natural application of a widely known principle. For research, which goes into the heart and marrow of a matter, is naturally a research into its very nature

or essence, or rather into the history of the organic development of such a matter, as we say in Dutch "het wordings-proces" of such a matter. The question is not only what is a matter, a tendency, a movement *in itself,* but how has it grown to be what it is in itself.

This explains the fervor of the historic spirit across the sea, but it also indicates where obviously lies the value of historic studies, in the Seminary course. And this value involves all its various disciplines.

Take for example the field of Introduction.

Our day is one of negations. Everything seems to tremble beneath the assaults of a destructive and often arrogant criticism.

Now the ostrich-policy does not avail us. The fact that we deliberately attempt to close our eyes to the unpleasant sight of the walls of our citadel, apparently crumbling before the unceasing assaults of the enemy and of breaches in them aswarm with invading foes, will not safeguard our position. Nor will it satisfy a mind asearch after the truth.

We cannot and may not keep our theological students ignorant of these ponderous attacks on the Scriptures; lest they leave us unarmed and, falling into the hands of the enemy, become his easy prey.

The fullest information is the surest defense. Men about us, themselves unable to do telling original work, in this department, or even intelligently to follow the gigantic work performed by others, prattle about these matters with the assurance of absolute certainty and indisputable proof, and deal out large slices of the rampant heresy to young men totally unfit to sift the evidence presented or to discriminate between facts and mere hypotheses, with complacent selfgratulation and pitying disdain for those who presume to question the dicta of their oracles. But the student of the history of Introduction meanwhile quietly watches the battle between the giants, with intense interest and hopeful assurance. For the field behind and towards the distant horizon is fairly strewn with the ruins of war-engines, formerly employed in the attack; with exploded theories and contradictory hypotheses, which outlived their usefulness; and with the bodies of the slain, which perished in the assault. For decades the battle has raged about the Pentateu-

chal and Hexateuchal questions and the reconstruction process goes on apace, whilst the leaders in the assault are wildly theorizing and hopelessly quarreling amongst themselves.

And as he watches, the student of Introduction thinks of the bitter assault on the New Testament of the Tuebingen-school, half a century ago, and he feels that he can afford to lean back and wait.

If anyone doubts the ground of this assurance let him read what Prof. Bousset, of Erlangen said in the "Theologische Rundshau," for January, 1897. The writer, himself a critic and far removed from the traditional position, disdainfully exclaims: "What has become of these different writers of the sources, these remodelers and redactors, whom people tried to find in the Gospels, in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Apocalypse, nay even in the Epistles of Paul? They are forgotten and have disappeared. Without looking at them, and that justly, Juelicher, in his work, has silently passed them by, with their hypotheses of a day."

There is solid comfort in this testimony of a high German authority.

For is not the air thick with the smoke of this very battle, in the field of Old Testament Introduction? And is not even now the dawn of a better day upon us? Is not the old motto of the Old Testament critics: "First the law and then the prophets" —tottering before our eyes and have not the German Universities given tongue, as the scholars took up the scent of Nippur? Have not Jeremias of Leipsig and Mueller of Vienna boldly come forward to assert the claims of the traditional order—"the law and the prophets?"

The old Bible has withstood the attacks of the ages and will continue to do so till the very end.

It is evident, therefore, that historic studies are extremely valuable to the theological student, in this direction.

But the same is true in the field of Dogmatics. The conscientious student of Ecclesiastical history is necessarily a student of Dogmatics. The two are absolutely correlated. The history of the Church is, in its last analysis, only the study of the history of the great dogmas, about which the tide of battle has ever surged. In this discipline we trace the gradual development of the various doctrinal systems of the Church, all spring-

ing from the same original root, but diverging, as the centre of gravity is shifted from one doctrine to another and as the truth is differentiated in the minds of men. History teaches us the laborious process of this evolution; it enables us to view the present in the light of the past; it warns us against the danger of complacency; it causes us to observe the swing of the pendulum of doctrine, in the arc of human estimates of divine things, and it opens our eyes to the fact that, dogmatically speaking, "there is nothing new under the sun."

As you study genetic Church-history, you see behind you an apparent chaos. The light brooding over it is not always clear, so as to make discernment easy and clear, the data of your observation are often necessarily faultive and unreliable. But you see Titanic forces at work and every face in the picture seems directed to you; the past is ever making for the present and there is nothing in the present but it is recognizable, in some form or another, in the past. Thus one learns, to his surprise, that there are only births and no deaths in the great family-life, to which he has been introduced. No tendency of faith, once evolved and detached from the great central mass of truth, seems ever to die again. Truly the task of the Ecclesiastical historian is an absorbing one and worthy of the closest application.

And thus I say to our theological students: "Heed your historic studies, my brethren, and you will reap the harvest of this work, in all your other labors."

It will quicken your interest in Exegesis; in your Dogmatics it will show you old friends and old foes, though often in a new and somewhat unfamiliar garb. It will keep you from that jaundiced pessimism, which sees no good in the present and which looks for the momentary collapse of the Kingdom of God. At the same time, it will safeguard you against an inane optimism, which sees no danger ahead and whose horizon is bounded by its immediate environment. It will make you steady and selfpossessed under fire, sure of yourselves, strong in your convictions, yet broad and deep in your sympathies.

It will quicken your imaginations and it will give you an inexhaustible field of rich homiletical illustrations.

You will bear with me if I seem to magnify my own task and yours. But I speak from deepest conviction and would

create in your souls, were it possible, in these brief years of common work, an interest in these studies, which shall become an ever growing passion and a fruitful source of intensity in your public ministrations.

V. *Treatment of the subject.*

In the treatment of this subject we may follow one of two methods. We can treat the great mass of information, which Church-history tries to arrange and to digest, either *chronologically* or *topologically*. In the one the time-element preponderates. We view facts, events, personalities and developments from the the standpoint of co-temporaneousness, rather than from that of their logical connection with the past and the future. In the topological treatment we follow the main chronological divisions, but within these limitations, we lay stress rather on the logical ordering of the events than on their co-temporaneousness with other events. The event will, generally speaking, easily align itself, in the perspective of a given period, when its logical connection has once been grasped by the student and when he has mastered the secret of the gradual evolution of the dogma or custom or heresy or creed, under consideration.

Schleiermacher has tried to distinguish between "*periods*" and "*epochs.*" The period he called, "a series of events, in which quiet development uninterruptedly prevails." *Eine reihe von momenten in denen ununterbrochen die ruhige fortbildung ueberwiegt.* On the contrary he defined an epoch as a series of events, in which suddenness of origin preponderates. *Eine reihe von momenten in denen das plotzliche Entstehen ueberwiegt.*

But Dr. Kuyper has well remarked that this whole distinction is extraneous and unhistorical. The suddenness of certain events is only apparent and, when it is real, these events are by no means always entitled to an epochical meaning and importance.

The pure chronological method appears to us wholly mechanical and is perhaps more than anything else to blame for the indifference, wherewith this discipline has been regarded by the students for the ministry.

It is true the topological method is also open to serious criticism, but it has the advantage of clearness and, judiciously applied, it will inevitably fasten the great events and developments

in Church-history, together with the men, who prominently figured in them, upon the mind of the student.

These again in turn will form the skeleton, around which the fibres and tissues, the muscles and nerves of the growing body will be woven into one living organism.

Let me repeat once more, it is our task, in the brief time, allowed for the work, to obtain a comprehensive view of the order of events in the life of the Church and to bring this knowledge in living touch with the present.

He who loses himself in minute details, in this treatment, forgets the purpose of the original scheme and the need, which the student has, in his later ministry, of such a broad outlook.

Special work belongs to postgraduate courses, the regular Seminary-course aims, or at least, should aim, at the laying of broad foundations; at the creation of a taste for the study of Church-history; at the outlining of the vast continents of historical fact, which the student may later on independently explore, when he has formed correct habits of study and has created a taste for the work.

The less formal the course, the fewer the crutches on which the student can lean; the greater his responsibility for personal initiative and conscientious work, the better. The best class-book is only a means to an end. Whoever studies *the book* and the book alone, without studying *books* and *subjects,* will never enter into that wider domain and richer field, into which the way opens for that man alone who devotes himself heart and soul to the task.

Brethren of the Board, Fellow Instructors, Fellow Students, Friends:

This is my conception of the task, which God in his providence, through your call and my acceptance of the same, has laid upon me. With *that* treatment of the great discipline of Ecclesiastical history I have made a beginning in your midst, during the past year. With all my soul, I love the engrossing task and, God willing, I would inspire my students with a little of that love. And above all would I kindle in their hearts some sense of the grandeur of our own confessional faith, in its historic interpretation; so that in loving its past, they shall fervently believe in its future; so that they shall know themselves and shall be able intelligently to answer the questions—"*what am I, why am I what I am, and what for?*

Thus placing their feet firmly on the historical basis, accepting the history the fathers have made, as a sacred heirloom, strong in their own convictions, yet free from all bigotry, and with a faith deep as the sea, yet boundless as the mercy of God, I would help to make of them laborers, in the Presbyterian fold, that need not to be ashamed.

To that end may God bless our Theological School and raise up for it friends, able and gladly willing to make it, what it must be.

"*Vivat, floreat, crescat Seminarium!*"